Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Swanzey Planning Board
Meeting Minutes – June 25, 2026
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting of the Swanzey Planning Board was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Victoria Ames. The meeting was held at Whitcomb Hall and online for the public. Other members present: Vice Chair Scott Self, Michael York, Richard Lane, Mark Scalera, Brandon Self, Alternates Stacey Goodale, Charlie Harbeck and Selectman's Representative Jay Ward. Also present was Town Planner Adam Paquette and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

The Chair called the roll and read the agenda for the evening. A quorum was present.

Absent: Alternate Jane Johnson

Others Present:
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Bonnie Blodgett, Sarah Miller, Thoris Lewis, Terry Lewis, Michael Gomarlo, Mike & Kathy Willett, Scott Frazier, David Roy, Eric Kerylow, Emily Kerylow, Molly Compton, Jeff Hurt, Michael Faulkner, Sara Carbonneau, Bernie Amlaw, Amie Amlaw, Mike & Jeanne Thieme, Bill Hutwelker, Jimmy Tempesta, Bob Audette, Cheri Domina, Mike Johnson.

MINUTES:
The meeting minutes of June 11, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Scott Self to approve the meeting minutes as presented. There was a second by Mark Scalera**.** All were in favor. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

REGIONAL IMPACT
A Motion was made by Richard Lane that there was no regional impact. There was a second by Scott Self. All were in favor. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

APPLICATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARING(S):
A. PB-26-009: Site Plan Review – Terry Lewis has submitted a site plan review application for the property located at 69 James Road to use an existing 1,600 square foot detached accessory dwelling unit as an event space and to hold activities such as healing circles, yoga, meditation, retreats, and herbal classes. The property is at Tax Map 209 Lot 11 in the Business District.

Adam Paquette said that the intended use for this project is considered permitted use in the district, so there are no Zoning Board concerns. He would like an updated site plan that provides an accurate representation of the stream on the property and shows better parking and maneuverability to be sure it accommodates normal sized vehicles. The grassy area should not be used for parking. He stated that the septic system is adequate for 12-15 guests and 2 employees. The plans should also show how the structure and parking comply with federal ADA requirements. The DPW Director had expressed no concerns of traffic at this time, but if the traffic increases, a traffic study might be needed. He also needs to know if the curb cut needs to be changed. The Conservation Commission still needs to review the application and Adam stated that Board approval should be conditional on the Conservation Commission's approval.

Chair Ames reviewed the checklist with the Board.

A motion was made by Scott Self that the site plan application is complete and ready to go to public hearing; the motion was seconded by Richard Lane; all were in favor and the motion passed.

Chair Ames opened the public hearing at 6:12pm and welcomed Terry Lewis to speak about the project.

Terry informed the Board that the ADA ramp is there and one of the bathrooms is large enough to be ADA accessible. The grassy parking area will be hard packed. She measured the distance from the stream and reported that it is 40 feet from corner of building and 80 feet from upper field. She will mark the ADA parking spot on the plan as required.

Chair Ames asked if the Board had questions and Scott asked whether the boundary lines are necessary since it is such a large property. Adam confirmed that the boundary lines are not needed in this case. Consensus of the Board was that the boundary lines would not be required.

Chair Ames asked if there were any questions from the public: Bonnie Blodgett is a resident on the road and asked about the traffic and noise and wondered if it was a done deal since she just heard about it. Adam explained the notice provided, thanked her for coming and asked for her concerns. She wondered about noise and traffic. Scott asked Terry about the expected noise level and Terry responded that the gatherings will be primarily indoors and that they use meditating music. Traffic will be periodic, not constant. Scott assured Bonnie that if Terry wants to expand the business she would need to come before the Board again and that abutters would get notification as they did this time. Richard asked Terry for the proposed schedule; Terry said it would be primarily evenings for 2-3 hours. Mark Scalera asked if there would be overnight guests, Terry said she doesn't have the facilities for that. Scott asked for clarification that the Conservation Commission needs to review the application and Jay Ward explained the process to Terry and invited her to attend the meeting at 4pm on first Monday of each month.

Richard Lane made a motion to continue the public hearing to July 9th; the motion was seconded by Scott Self; all were in favor and the motion carried.

Discussions and Other Business:

A. Robert Audette – Solar Ordinance Discussion

Bob Audette and Cheri Domina are on the Energy Commission; Bob explained that the Town doesn't currently have an ordinance to regulate solar installations and while most people are probably not opposed to solar, he feels that the Town would not want a commercial solar array in a residential business. He has been working with SolSmart and Energy NH who provide free resources for towns such as assistance creating solar ordinances. The Energy Commission has been working on this for quite some time and he provided 3 versions of the proposed ordinance for solar energy systems. He also explained another reason to participate with SolSmart is to achieve recognition which helps when requesting funding. Jay suggested the ordinance be more specific about decommissioning.

Chair Ames thanked Bob and Cheri for their work; the Board will review this and ask them back to discuss it further. Adam will provide this information to Sarah Bollinger since she is working on reorganizing the zoning ordinance.

B. Excavation Permit Discussion – 56 Cory Pond Road

Chair Ames explained to the public the protocol for this discussion and that this was not considered a public hearing but more of a conversation. Adam provided the background, which was that the property in question was found to be non-compliant with grandfathered excavation standards. The issue is that the excavation business which has been in operation for decades does not have an Excavation Report on file at the Town which was required to be filed by August 4, 1991. The result is that the site does not meet the requirements for grandfathered status, so the Town staff is proposing a 12-month compliance timeline. Adam consulted with the Town's attorney who has advised that the Planning Board cannot grant a lifetime waiver because the land use rules stay with the property, not with the property owner.

Chair Ames reviewed the process in this case so far and provided the background of the excavation operation. She then invited property owner Michael Johnson and his representative/neighbor Emily Kerylow to come forward to speak with the Board. Emily requested that Molly Compton, who is an engineer and a property abutter, join them. Molly sited various sections of the RSA as well as previous cases of operations that have not met the requirements. She stated that Mr. Johnson has been filing his Intent to Excavate each year and has paid his fees and taxes and that the Town bears some responsibility since this has not been questioned for 35 years.

Scott replied that nobody disputes the business was in operation, and that the Town knew it, and that Mr. Johnson was paying taxes and fees; the Town only disputes whether the notice was sent out, or if it was returned and commented that nothing would change if they found the paperwork.

A motion was made by Scott Self to give Mr. Johnson the benefit of the doubt and require that he file the Excavation Report within a year; and to further allow him the ability to request a one-time 12-month extension; Michael York seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

C. Shane Lampinen – Arrowcrest Drive Extension

Shane Lampinen was not present; Chair asked for a consensus whether to continue without him. The Board would like him to attend a meeting to learn more about how much of an extension he needs so they can determine if he has just cause to be granted the extension.

Other Business:

Chair Ames asked Adam whether the draft minutes of the Joint meeting should be approved by the Selectboard since they ran the meeting. Adam replied he had intended the minutes to be approved by the joint board at their next meeting, but at Chair Ames request, he will ask the Selectboard to approve at their next meeting.

Chair Ames brought up a suggested change to the site plan regulations, Section 6. The Board agreed to hold another public hearing on 7/23 to consider that change.

Richard asked if the Plane View development satisfies 'substantial improvement' on the property. There was discussion regarding what, if anything, had been designated at the time of the extension and the importance of doing so.

Adam reminded the Board to send questions or suggestions regarding the Zoning ordinance audit to him. The draft of the reorganized document will be available soon to review before the next joint meeting.

Scott provided an update of the Wastewater Advisory Committee's work. The Town is signing with Underwood Engineers to design a route to Keene. According to DES, other routes need to be considered so that the Town can qualify for funding. It will be many months before the results are available. In the meantime, the committee will be looking into the Town purchasing the West Swanzey Water Company and what the Town can do with it. They are also working on rate changes for the current septic system.

Michael York explained that there is a new direction for the Governance Committee and they will be looking into old ordinances to see if they still fit.

ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Mark Scalera. There was a second to the motion by Brandon Self with no further discussion. All were in favor and the m*otion passed.* Adjournment occurred at 7:31pm.

Next Meeting: July 9, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on July 9, 2026